Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:*

Mission View Terrace HOA
PO Box 133
Lakeside, MT 59922

2. *Type of action*: Application to Change an Existing Non-irrigation Water Right 76LJ 30067020

3. *Water source name:* Flathead Lake

4. *Location affected by project*: The place of use is generally located in the SWSWNE of Sec 6, Township 26N, Range 20W, Flathead County, MT

5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*

The Applicant seeks authorization to change the point of diversion, place of use, and purpose (use) of Statement of Claim 76LJ 23048-00. The point of diversion will be moved approximately 800 feet southwest of the historic point of diversion and two pumps will divert water verses one. 3.57 acres of lawn will be irrigated within the commons area of the subdivision. The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana Natural Heritage Program: Endangered, Threatened Species and Species of Special Concern, Wetland Mapper program
-Montana Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks (DFWP); Dewatered Stream Information
-Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) Clean Water Act Information and PWS Drinking Water Watch databases
-U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); web soil survey
-Montana Historical Society

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity *- Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.*

Flathead Lake is not listed by DFWP as chronically or periodically dewatered. Upon analysis by the Department Flathead Lake is found to have water in excess of that requested by the Applicant.

Determination: No impact.

Water quality *- Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.*

According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) Clean Water Act Information Center in 2014 Flathead Lake was listed as having one or more uses impaired due to one or more of the following probable causes: mercury, nitrogen (total), phosphorous (total), polychlorinated biphenyls and sedimentation/siltation. Water will be diverted from Flathead Lake at 44 GPM to irrigate 3.75 acres lawn. 70% of the water applied will be consumed, 30% will return to the source. Irrigation use is expected to have little or no effect on the Lakes water quality. The Department found that the proposed use will not affect water quality.

Determination: No impact.

Groundwater *- Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.*

Determination: N/A, project does not involve groundwater.

DIVERSION WORKS *- Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.*

The current irrigation system irrigates 1.12 acres, includes one pump, four zones and was installed by Kohlbeck Quality Irrigation Company in 2009-2010. At full build 3.57 acres will be irrigated and the system will include two pumps, 16 irrigation zones and approximately 134 sprinklers each with an output of 1.8 GPM. Water will be diverted from Flathead Lake via two Goulds HSC20 2 HP multistage pumps. Water will pass thru a manifold and be routed to valve boxes that are operated by the electronic irrigation controller. When open the valves direct water to different zones. The total dynamic head for the largest currently operating zone is 184.18 feet; each pump will operate at 80 psi and provide an output of 22 GPM. Two pumps will operate simultaneously and multiple zones will be irrigated at once to limit irrigation time to night hours. Combined the flow rate will not exceed 44 GPM. Water will be

distributed via ½", ¾", 1" and 2" poly pipe. Sprinklers will be Hunter PGP pop-up rotor sprinklers. The pump can be shut off during times of water shortage. The Department found that no significant negative impact will occur to existing water users and surface water resources from the proposed project.

Determination: No impact.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species **-** *Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program website was reviewed to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern" in Township 26N, Range 20W that could be impacted by the proposed project.

Plants:
No plant species were identified as threatened, endangered or as a species of special concern in this township and range.

Animals:
The Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus) is listed as threatened and the Westslope Cutthroat Trout (Oncorhynchus clarkia lewisi), Wolverine (Gulo gulo) and Fisher (Martes pennanti) are listed as sensitive species by the USFS. The Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodia), Brown Creeper (Certhia americana), Black Tern (Chlidonias niger), Pileated Woodpecker (Dryocopus pileatus) and Cassin's Finch (Haemorhous cassinii) are listed S3 to S3B by MFWP meaning their populations are at risk because their numbers are very limited. This is a change application; the Applicant will be diverting less water than historic practices. An adequate quantity of water will still exist in Flathead Lake to maintain existing populations of both threatened and sensitive species of fish. The 3.75 acres of common area were historically disturbed, any impacts to sensitive mammal species or plants most likely have already occurred. The proposed project will not impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants and aquatic species or any species of special concern.

Determination: No impact.

Wetlands **-** *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

Determination: N/A, project does not involve wetlands.

Ponds **-** *For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

Determination: N/A, project does not involve ponds.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

According to soil survey data provided by the NRCS, soil within the place of use consists mostly of gravelly silt loam with 4-15 % slopes. Soils within the proposed place of use drain quickly and are not susceptible to saline seep. The use of water from Flathead Lake and irrigation of 3.75 acres of lawn will not cause degradation of soil quality and stability.

Determination: No impact.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

Any impacts to existing vegetation will be within the range of current disturbances due to current development within the subdivision. No land will be disturbed due to this application, therefore noxious weeds are not expected to be established or spread.

Determination: No Impact.

AIR QUALITY - *Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.*

No air pollutants were identified as resulting from the Applicants proposed use.

Determination: No impact.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.*

This project is not located on state or federal land and therefore this section is not applicable.

Determination: No impact.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

The project is located in an area with no locally adopted environmental plans.

Determination: No impact.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

The proposed project will not inhibit, alter or impair access to present recreational opportunities in the area. The project is not expected to create any significant pollution, noise, or traffic congestion in the area that may alter the quality of recreational opportunities. The proposed place of use and diversion do not exist on land designated as wilderness.

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts human health.*

There should be no significant negative impact on human health from this proposed use.

Determination: No impact.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there is any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*
*Yes___ No_**x**__ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.*

Determination: No impact.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*
Impacts on:

(a) *Cultural uniqueness and diversity?* None identified.

(*b*) *Local and state tax base and tax revenues?* None identified.

(c) *Existing land uses?* None identified.

(*d*) *Quantity and distribution of employment?* None identified.

(e) *Distribution and density of population and housing?* None identified.

(f) *Demands for government services?* None identified.

(g) *Industrial and commercial activity?* None identified.

(h) *Utilities?* None identified.

(i) *Transportation?* None identified.

(j) *Safety?* None identified.

(k) *Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?* None identified.

2. *Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*

Secondary Impacts: None identified.

Cumulative Impacts: None identified.

3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:* None

4. *Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:*

No reasonable alternatives were identified in the EA.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative: None identified.

2 Comments and Responses: None

4. *Finding:*
Yes___ No_X__ Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action because no significant impacts were identified.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Melissa Brickl
Title: Hydrologist/Water Resource Specialist
Date: April 8, 2014